

“SINCE THEN I BELIEVE IN FATE ...”

From 14 April through 10 July, the Robert Guttman Gallery hosted a new exhibition entitled *Since Then I Believe in Fate - Transports of Protectorate Jews to the Baltic States in 1942*. It was prepared by the Jewish Museum in Prague's Holocaust Department in association with the Terezín Memorial and the Terezín Initiative Institute.



This exhibition was the first part of a broader exhibition project on the little-known transports that were dispatched from the Terezín ghetto before 26 October 1942, when deportations to Auschwitz began. Its focus was on the fate of Bohemian Jews who were transported between 9 January and 22 October 1942 to the Nazi-occupied Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia. The second part of the exhibition project, which is planned for 2007, will be on the deportations of Czech Jews to Belarus and eastern Poland.

The fate of Bohemian Jews deported to these places was not previously documented. Staff at the Jewish Museum's Holocaust Department, headed by Dr. Jana Šplíchalová (the exhibition curator) and Lukáš Příbyl (a filmmaker and historian working with the Jewish Museum), however, managed to bring together a unique collection of archival documents – including trial records with statements by Nazis and former inmates, which are kept in the Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg and other archives.

The recorded interviews with Shoah survivors will be presented in the spring of 2006 in a four-part documentary film. Some of the material brought together for this film was on view at the exhibition. The curators prioritised authentic testimony over mere factual accounts of historical events and provided scope for those who survived the horrors of the ghettos and concentration camps in eastern Europe to convey their impressions and individual experiences.



The unique materials on view at this exhibition were brought together as a result of extensive, long-term research and had never before been presented in such a comprehensive way. In their entirety, they enriched and clarified what is known of the fate of the transports that left the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to the East in 1942.

The exhibition was put together with financial support from the Air Navigation Services of the Czech Republic, Czech-Israeli Chamber of Commerce, the Holocaust Survivors Foundation and the Foreign Institute of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Thanks for their kind support are also due to Rabbi Norman R. Patz and students of his congregation Sholom West Essex in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, USA, who have helped to fund further research into the transports of Czech Jews to concentration camps in Belarus, the Baltic States and Poland.

NEW LIBRARY DEPOSITORY IN PINKAS SYNAGOGUE ATTIC



The project to repair Pinkas Synagogue – Memorial to the Victims of the Shoah was divided into several phases after its flood-ing in August 2002 (For more information, see Newsletters 4/2002, 4/2003 and 1/2004). Phase three, which was carried out during opening hours and completed in July 2004, saw the completion of repairs to the hand-written walls inscriptions which contain the names of the Je-wish victims of the Holocaust from Bohemia and Moravia. In April 2005, the reconstruction of Pinkas Synagogue culminated in the rebuilding

of the attic depository as part of the preservation work on the upper part of the synagogue. This depository will now be used as a museum library. Repair and reconstruction work was made possible here after the Jewish Museum in Prague, last year, relocated its art collection from the Pinkas Synagogue attic into a new art depository in Smíchov Synagogue. After clearing out the attic space of Pinkas Synagogue, repairs were carried out to the roof, pipes and electrical installations. In addition, new lighting with a UV filter system was installed in the depository, as were centrally controlled dehumidifiers and steam humidifiers. The depository now meets all the requirements for the high quality and safe storage of books. In total, 13,000 specially cleaned volumes of periodicals – amounting to 260 linear metres of the Jewish Museum library holdings – have been relocated into this space. The costs associated with implementing the above work were partially covered by a grant from the World Monuments Fund. Our special thanks go to this organization for all the financial contributions it made to the reconstruction of the Pinkas Synagogue, which was damaged by flooding in 2002.

“REMEMBERING TEREZIN” IN MANILA, PHILIPPINES



The Jewish Museum in Prague was involved in the preparation of Remembering Terezin, an event that was held between 28 April and 3 May in Manila by the Czech Ambassador to the Philippines, Stašek Slavický, in co-operation with the Israeli Embassy and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

This event opened with an exhibition of Terezin children’s drawings from the Jewish Museum in Prague’s collections. A screening of clips from Hans Krasa’s children’s opera *Brundibár* and the film *Transport from Paradise* was accompanied by a lecture and two extensive commentaries by Dr. Miloš Pojar, the director of the Jewish Museum in Prague’s Education and Culture Centre. An exhibition of Holocaust photographs from the Jerusalem-based Yad Vashem Memorial opened with an introductory panel on the Czech Jewish boy Peter Ginz. In addition, a packed audience was treated to a concert by the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Castillo with guest Israeli pianist Noam Sivan. Featuring performances of the works of Czech Jewish composers Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein and Victor Ullman, this was a great success.

The entire event created public awareness in Manila of the fate of Czech Jews during the Holocaust, the Terezin ghetto, the Terezin children drawings and the music of Terezin composers. At the close of the event, Miloš Pojar gave a talk at

the Israeli Embassy to members of the diplomatic corps and local cultural representatives. The talk focused on the history of Czech Jews in modern times and was enriched by examples of authentic documents from Terezín.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE CENTRE PROGRAMMES

In March, the Jewish Museum in Prague's Education and Culture Centre, in association with the Prague Writers' Festival, hosted an evening with Ewald Osers, the Czech-born British poet and translator of Czech literature. With 150 translated books – including nearly 40 poetry anthologies – to his credit, Ewald Osers has introduced the works of major Czech writers to the English-speaking world, such as Jaroslav Seifert, Jan Skácel, Vítězslav Nezval, Egon Hostovský, Ivan Klíma and Karel Čapek. The event at the Centre, entitled *You Cant Get Rid of a Prague Accent*, opened with a talk by Dr. Vlasta Brtníková from the Prague Writers' Festival Foundation. Osers' work was also discussed by Prof. Martin Hliský from the Department of English and American Studies at Charles University, Prague. National Theatre member Josef Vinklář read excerpts from Osers' poetry anthology *Golden City* and Osers himself read from his memoirs *The Snows of Yesteryear*.



In May, the Centre hosted an outstanding lecture by Dr. Robert Fischl entitled *Sonja's Legacy* which was about the life of his cousin Sonja Fischerová who perished in Auschwitz. An exhibition of Sonja's drawings and paintings from Terezín will be on view at the Centre from mid-September to late October 2005. Also in May, the Centre opened an exhibition of paintings and graphic art by Karel Šafář *Jewish Motifs of Magical Prague*. Among the exhibits were the series of oil paintings *Prague, The Jewish Past, The Golem and Wise Men* and the series of prints *Moses and Kafka's Prague*.

Two publications were presented at the Centre in June: *From Hanukah to Hanukah*, a selection of feature articles written for the BBC's Prague Section by Dr. Leo Pavlát, and *Severed Life – The Diaries of Etta Hillesum (1941-1943)*, writings by a Dutch Jewish student who perished in Auschwitz.

As part of the series *My Encounters with Jewishness*, the Centre hosted a talk by musicologist, publicist and music critic Ivan Medek.

SHOAH AND HEROISM COMMEMORATION DAY



On 5 May, the eve of Yom Ha-Shoah – Shoah and Heroism Commemoration Day – the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Holocaust Victims Foundation held a commemorative evening in the Spanish Synagogue, Prague. On Yom Ha-Shoah, Jews remember the Warsaw ghetto uprising of April 1943, recalling both the resistance against the Nazis and the suffering of the Jewish people during the war. This year, Yom Ha-Shoah, which occurs on the 27th of Nissan, fell on 6 May.

Opening speeches were made by the heads of the host institutions – the Director of the Jewish Museum in Prague Leo Pavlát, the Executive Director of the Holocaust Victims Foundation Jarmila Neumannová and the Board Chairman of the Holocaust Victims Foundation and Vice-President of the Auschwitz Committee Prof. Felix Kolmer.

Later in the evening, actor Jan Potměšil read the story The Professor from Ivan Klíma's book *Moje nebezpečné výlety*, and the Stamic Quartet performed string quartets by Hans Krása and Ervín Schulhoff. The event was presented by actress Eva Holubová.

HOMAGE TO THE CHILD VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST



On 14 June 2005, the Czech Senate hosted a presentation of student projects entitled Coexistence of Nationalities. This was held under the auspices of the Senate's Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions and Prague City Hall. The second phase of the successful project Neighbours Who Disappeared – which is organized by the Jewish Museum in Prague's Education and Culture Centre in association with the civic association Zapomenutí/The Forgotten Ones – was officially announced in the Senate. It is entitled Homage to the Child Victims of the Holocaust.

The Czech school pupils and students taking part in this project find out about murdered Jewish children who attended their schools before the war. So far, the project has involved schools in Telč, Pilsen, České Budějovice, Chotěboř, Varnsdorf and Litomyšl. Memorial plaques have been installed in the schools and copies of them have been made for display in a nationwide travelling exhibition. Work on the project draws on methodological inspiration in order to research the Holocaust period in accordance with the framework educational programme of the Czech Ministry of Education at all levels of education. The project also represents a challenge for young people to meet with the last generation of direct witnesses of the Holocaust and materializes the memory of the child victims of Nazi anti-Semitism.

BOOK WORLD IN PRAGUE

On 5-8 May 2005, the Jewish Museum in Prague attended the 11th International Book Fair – Book World 2005. This event, which is of interest both to specialists and the general public, was held at its traditional venue – the Industrial Palace at Prague's Exhibition Grounds. It was attended by 627 exhibitors from the Czech Republic and abroad and attracted nearly 30,000 visitors.

The Jewish Museum in Prague presented a comprehensive selection of its exhibition catalogues, specialist publications and collections of lectures and seminars held at the Education and Culture Centre. The newly published Dictionary of Judaica, in particular, attracted public interest, as did the Jewish Museum's exhibition programme which is currently under preparation and is to be accompanied by a catalogue. There was also interest in the information provided on the Education and Culture Centre's programmes and the services of the Reference Centre.

CONCERT FOR MEMBERS OF PRAGUE'S JEWISH COMMUNITY



Last year, the Jewish Museum in Prague held a concert for members of Prague's Jewish community in to mark the 10th anniversary of the Museum's independent operations. This year, the Museum has held another concert for the Jewish community in the Spanish Synagogue – which is now becoming an annual tradition. At this special event, the violin virtuoso Václav Hudeček and harpsichordist Petr Adamec performed works by Handel, František Benda and Giuseppe Tartini.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Jewish Museum in Prague has just published three new Czech language catalogues for its permanent exhibitions: The History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia - I. From the First Settlements until Emancipation, which is housed in Maisel Synagogue; The History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia – II. From Emancipation to the Present, which is housed in the Spanish Synagogue; and Jewish Customs and Traditions, which is housed in Klausen Synagogue and the Ceremonial Hall. All these catalogues contain texts on the individual topics of each exhibition, as well as a wide selection of full-colour reproductions of the most valuable exhibits. Some of the reproductions have never been published before – such as the personal signature of Rabbi Loew (the Maharal). Most of the texts are written by Alexandr Putík, Olga Sixtová, Anita Franková, Vlastimila Hamáčková, Arno Pařík and Jiřina Šedinová. All these catalogues can be ordered from the Museum's mailing address, via email ✉ sales@jewishmuseum.cz or via the website www.jewishmuseum.cz.



ERICH KULKA, 1911–1995

The Jewish Museum in Prague and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem have published a memorial publication for the 10th anniversary of the death of the writer and historian Erich Kulka.

PROMINENT VISITS



April

– A delegation of the American Jewish Committee, led by its long-standing Executive Director David Harris.

June

- A group of 13 members of the Cultural Council, Munich City Hall
- Two groups of American friends of ORT (visited the Museum and its Education and Culture Centre)
- Thomas O. Hecht, President of the Begin-Sadat Center Bar-Ilan University